

Message Text

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ACTION EA-10

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5818

INFO USLO PEKING

AMEMBASSY TAIPEI

AMEMBASSY TOKYO

CINCPAC HONOLULU HI

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 HONG KONG 7767

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT PROP CH

SUBJECT: A CHINA WITHOUT DISRUPTIVE POLITICAL CAMPAIGNS?

1. SUMMARY: TWELVE MONTHS AGO, AS THE REGIME FACED UP TO THE FACT THAT SEVERAL YEARS OF MASS CRITICISM AND LEADERSHIP STRUGGLE HAD ERODED PUBLIC SUPPORT AND CONFIDENCE, PEKING SOUGHT TO REORIENT ITS DOMESTIC FOCUS TOWARD NATIONAL CONSTRUCTION. TODAY, THIS EFFORT HAS TO A DEGREE SUCCEEDED IN CALMING THE SURFACE OF THE POLITICAL SCENE, BUT THE SAME PROBLEM IS STILL IN EVIDENCE, AND THE PRC IS FINDING IT DIFFICULT TO STIMULATE POPULAR ENTHUSIASM FOR PRODUCTION WITH THE OLD CAMPAIGN APPROACH. JUST AS LAST YEAR'S EXHORTATIONS TO CRITICIZE LIN PIAO AND CONFUCIUS PROVOKED WAGE DEMANDS RATHER THAN GREATER PRODUCTION DRIVE, SO TODAY'S EXHORTATIONS TO ACCEPT DICTATORSHIP AND INCREASE OUTPUT HAVE MET WITH APPARENT INDIFFERENCE AND CROSS-PURPOSES. END SUMMARY

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2. BEGINNING A YEAR AGO WITH ITS CATALOGING OF ECONOMIC ILLS IN CENTRAL DIRECTIVE 21 (1974), AND WITH A POLITICAL PRESCRIPTION BASED ON UNITY AND OBEDIENCE TO CENTRAL PARTY DISCIPLINE IN ITS PARTY DAY EDITORIAL, THE REGIME HAS MOVED AHEAD TO SET A NEW SERIES OF GUIDELINES FOR PUTTING THE NATION BACK ON ITS FEET WITH A PERIOD OF POLITICAL PEACE. MAO'S RELUCTANT ACCEPTANCE OF THE NEED TO PROMOTE STABILITY MARKED A FURTHER TURNING OF CHINA'S DOMESTIC SIGHTS TOWARD REGULARIZATION AND THE REVITALIZATION OF INSTITUTIONS; AND, AS LAUNCHED BY THE JANUARY NATIONAL PEOPLE'S CONGRESS (NPC), NATIONAL CONSTRUCTION HAS BECOME THE PRC'S LONG-TERM TASK WITH THE GOAL "POWERFUL MODERN SOCIALIST CHINA" BEFORE THE END OF THE CENTURY.

3. AT THE SAME TIME, A NEW LEADERSHIP COLLEGIUM IS FUNCTIONING WHICH, ALTHOUGH IT INCLUDES YOUTHFUL REVOLUTIONARIES, GIVES PREFERENCE TO PARTY ELDERS. RESPONSIBILITIES IN THE COLLEGIUM AND INTERLOCKING, WITH CHECKS AND BALANCES ALL DESIGNED TO PREVENT HEGEMONY AND TO SUSTAIN AN IMAGE OF UNITY AND STABILITY AT THE CENTER. A NEW COLLECTIVE LEADERSHIP EXISTS BELOW MAO IN THE PARTY VICE CHAIRMAN RANKS, AND AN ARRANGEMENT FOR A COLLEGIUM OF OFFICIALS IS SET TO STAND IN FOR THE SEMIRETIRED PREMIER CHOU. WITHIN THIS LEADERSHIP GROUP, VICE PREMIER TENG HSIAO-PING IS TAKING ON THE BEARING OF A MAN WITH POWER IN HIS HANDS; HE EXUDES GREATER CONFIDENCE, AND A LEADERSHIP STYLE IS BEGINNING TO CRYSTALLIZE WHICH SEEMS TO CARRY HIS PERSONAL IMPRINT.

4. THE FOLE OF THE LEFT IN THE MODERATE CONSENSUS IS MARKED BY THE POSITIONING OF CHANG CHUN-CHIAO, WHO STANDS DIRECTLY BEHIND TENG HSIAO-PING IN THE PARTY, STATE AND PLA HIERARCHIES. THE CONSTITUENCY WHICH HE REPRESENTS, HOWEVER, SEEMS TO HAVE BEEN AFFECTED INTERNALLY BY THE DEBACLE OF THE 1974 POLITICAL CAMPAIGN. TOP MOVEMENT ACTIVISTS IN THAT YEAR, WANG HUNG-WEN AND CHIANG CHING, HAVE BECOME LESS PROMINENT FOLLOWING THE MOVEMENT'S CURTAILMENT. CHIANG'S LOWERED PROMINENCE IS THE MORE NOTABLE AS IT EVEN APPEARS TO DENY HER THE ATTENTION SHE PREVIOUSLY ENJOYED IN THE CULTURAL FIELD. CONVERSELY, CHANG CHUN-CHIAO AND YAO WEN-YUAN, WHO HAD LITTLE TO DO DURING LAST YEAR'S POLITICAL MOVEMENT, ARE MORE ACTIVE NOW

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FOLLOWING THE NPC AND THE LAUNCHING OF THE DICTATORSHIP OF THE PROLETARIAT CAMPAIGN.

5. BEGUN IN FEBRUARY, THIS CURRENT CAMPAIGN SERVES TO REINFORCE THE NATION'S DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM WITH THE MYSTIQUE OF MARXIST-LENINIST THOUGHT. THE IDEOLOGICAL BASE FOR THIS MOVEMENT, EXPOUNDED FIRST BY IDEOLOGUE YAO AND THEN BY CHANG CHUN-CHIAO, PUBLICLY REAFFIRMS THE LEFT'S COMMITMENT TO REGIME

DEVELOPMENT GOALS. IN IT, THE CURRENT "SOCIALIST STAGE OF DEVELOPMENT" IS AFFIRMED AS A BUILDING STAGE FOR COMMUNISM WHERE THE NATION'S MATERIAL WEALTH WILL BE HUSBANDED AND ENHANCED TO PROVIDE FOR THE MILLENNIUM TO COME. IN THE MEANTIME, PRACTICAL CONCESSIONS TO MATERIAL MOTIVATIONS--CHARACTERIZED AT THE NPC AS "NECESSARY FLEXIBILITY"--ARE WITH FEW EXCEPTIONS BEING RETAINED IN ORDER TO ENCOURAGE LABOR PRODUCTIVITY IN AGRICULTURE AND INDUSTRY. THE SOP FOR THOSE WHO WANTED TO RUSH AHEAD WITH THE COMMUNIZING PROCESS IS A PROMISE THAT SO-CALLED "BOURGEOIS RIGHTS" WOULD BE "RESTRICTED," WHICH FOR ALL PRACTICAL PURPOSES MEANS THEY WILL NOT BE ALLOWED TO EXPAND FURTHER.

6. DISRUPTIVE CAMPAIGNING, OSTENSIBLY PUT ASIDE BY AGREEMENT AT THE CENTER, IS NOT, HOWEVER, DYING EASILY IN SOME PROVINCES. FURTHERMORE, THE DICTATORSHIP CAMPAIGN ITSELF IS STIMULATING RENEWED PRESSURES FROM GROUPS WHICH LOOKED FOR REDRESS AND RETIRBUTION THROUGH THE POLITICAL CAMPAIGN PROCESS. AT MID-YEAR, CONTINUING LABOR UNREST, OVERZEALOUS IMPLEMENTATION OF RESTRICTIONS ON "BOURGEOIS RIGHTS," AND EVEN SOME CARRYOVER POSTER ATTACKS ON INDIVIDUALS MAR THE CENTER'S EFFORTS TO QUIET THINGS DOWN.

7. IN RESPONSE, THE REGIME HAS BEEN TINKERING WITH ITS APPROACH, AND, UNLIKE PREVIOUS CAMPAIGNS, SEEMS INTENT ON KEEPING THE CURRENT ONE A STUDY MOVEMENT AND NON-DISRUPTIVE. AS A TEMPORARY CONCESSION TO MARXIST-LENINIST REQUIREMENTS TO PUT STUDY INTO PRACTICE, IMPLEMENTATION OF THEORY IS HEMMED IN WITH RESTRICTIONS TO OBEY RATIONAL RULES AND REGULATIONS, TO MAINTAIN "STABILITY OF POLICIES," AND NOT TO ATTEMPT TO CHANGE POLICIES ARBITRARILY OR AT WILL. IN ADDITION, STUDY IS DEFINED AS A LONG-TERM PROCESS AND NOT SUSCEPTIBLE TO QUICK ACHIEVEMENTS.

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8. SOLUTIONS TO SOME PROBLEMS, HOWEVER, REMAIN ELUSIVE. ISSUES WHICH GENUINELY REPRESENT GRIEVANCES AMONG DISSATISFIED SECTORS OF THE POPULATION HAVE NOT BEEN SOLVED BY SIMPLY CREATING NEW REGIME GOALS. WAGE INCREASES HAVE BEEN FURTHER POSTPONED, AND UNPOPULAR PROGRAMS LIKE SENDING YOUTH TO THE COUNTRYSIDE, AS WELL AS LIMITED EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES, CONTINUE TO BE SOURCES OF SERIOUS DISCONTENT. IN ADDITION, FACTIONAL UNREST CONTINUES, WITH SEVERAL PROVINCES STRUGGLING TO PUT A NEW LEADERSHIP STRUCTURE IN ORDER OR TO RESOLVE OLD DIFFERENCES.

9. CURRENTLY, THE REGIME IS INCREASINGLY FACED WITH THE FACT OF CHAIRMAN MAO'S PHYSICAL DETERIORATION. OVER THE PAST YEAR THE CHAIRMAN'S MEETINGS WITH FOREIGN VISITORS HAVE PROGRESSIVELY POINTED UP HIS INFIRMITIES. THIS HAS BECOME A CHIEF TOPIC OF POST-MEETING DISCUSSIONS AMONG FOREIGNERS, AND THE CHINESE PEOPLE, WHO HAVE SEEN MAO ONLY THROUGH PHOTO IMAGES SINCE 1971, SURELY NOTICE THE DECLINE IN HIS HEALTH. CONFIDENTIAL

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CHINA'S REMEDY IS NOT YET CLEAR, BUT SOME FURTHER BLEACHING OUT OF THE MAO IMAGE HAS OCCURRED.

10. A FURTHER WORRY TAKING ON NEW FORCE AT MID-YEAR IS THE GENERALLY DISAPPOINTING RESULTS IN PRODUCTION. THE DICTATORSHIP CAMPAIGN IS NOT GENERATING MUCH MOVEMENT IN THE ECONOMY DSPITE A NUMBER OF CENTRAL DIRECTIVES ADDRESSING INDUSTRIAL PRODUCTION PROBLEMS AND EXHORTATIONS TO KEY INDUSTRIAL SECTORS AND RURAL UNITS WHICH PORTRAY THE REGIME'S RESOLVE TO GET MORE FROM ITS

WORKERS. WITH THE BASIC CAUSE ECONOMIC AND ROOTED IN LONG-TERM INVESTMENT NEEDS, THE PROBLEM HAS BECOME POLITICAL THROUGH ITS REFLECTION IN WORKER DISSATISFACTION.

1. AT THIS POINT, PEKING'S DECLINING ABILITY TO MOTIVATE ITS POPULATION ALONG REGIME POLICY GUIDELINES THROUGH THE USE OF POLITICAL CAMPAIGNS IS THE CHIEF PROBLEM TO BE FACED. EXHORTATIONS, THE TRADITIONAL MEANS OF RAISING ENTHUSIASM FOR PRODUCTION PUSHES, SEEMINGLY CAN NO LONGER SUPPLANT THE NEEDED INVESTMENT; SELF-RELIANCE, THE REGIME'S PROGRAM TO KEEP OUT FOREIGN DOMINATION AND CAPITALIST INFLUENCES, IS NOT SUFFICIENTLY MOTIVATING TO GENERATE THE MAJOR IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED WITHIN THE REGIME'S TIME FRAME FOR DEVELOPMENT.

12 THE MODERATE MAJORITY HOPED FOR BETTER RESULTS BY THIS TIME IN GETTING THE ECONOMY MOVING, AND IT WOULD NOT BE SURPRISING IF PRESSURES BEGAN TO GROW FOR MORE AUTHORITATIVE MEASURES--OR FOR MORE MATERIAL INCENTIVES--IN DEALING WITH LABOR. AT PRESENT, THE POWERHOLDERS ARE UNLIKELY, HOWEVER, TO RISK THE HARD-EARNED STABILITY AND UNITY THAT HAVE BEEN ACHIEVED, AND AGITATING THE MASSES SEEMS TO BE FURTHEST FROM THE REGIME'S MIND AT THIS TIME. CONTENTION AND STRUGGLE DOUBTLESS CONTINUE BEHIND THE SCENES IN THE TOP LEADERSHIP, BUT THE SURFACE INDICATIONS OF THIS ARE HARDER NOW TO FIND THAN AT ALMOST ANY TIME IN RECENT YEARS.
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